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Recreation Commission Minutes 12/11/07

Park and Recreation Commission

Minutes

Tuesday, December 11, 2007

Approved

The Park and Recreation Commission came to order at 7:00 PM on the second floor of the Arlington Senior Center on Tuesday, December 11, 2007.

Members in attendance included: Leslie Mayer, Don Vitters, Jen Rothenberg, Jim Robillard and Nancy Campbell. Also in attendance was Director of Recreation Joseph Connelly.

Members of the public included Charles McKenzie, Jeanne Leary, Patricia Worden, Chuck Carney, Justine Bloch, William Burke, Michael Caggiano, Bob Jefferson, Marvin Lewiton, John Fitzmaurice,

Nancy Galkowski and David Berry.

Approval of Minutes

The Park and Recreation Commission reviewed the minutes of November 13, 2007. Ms. Campbell motioned to approve the minutes and it was seconded by Mr. Robillard. Motion was approved 3-0-2.

Bishop Playground Gifting to Park Commission

Mr. Carney and Ms. Bloch reviewed the final steps of the BPIC community build for the Bishop School Playground. Mr. Carney announced the playground was now open and thanked the Commission, DPW and Mr. Connelly for their assistance. Mr. Connelly stated that he did have all necessary warranties and sign-offs. Mr. Vitters commended everyone involved with the project. Ms. Mayer also thanked the volunteers for their dedication to the projects. Mr. Vitters motioned to accept the gift of the renovated playground equipment. Ms. Campbell seconded the motion and approved 5-0. Mr. Carney will drop the hardware for maintenance off at the Recreation Department in the near future.

Fire Station Committee

Ms. Mayer reviewed the prior meeting between the Fire Station Committee and Park and Recreation Commission. Ms. Mayer introduced Deputy Town Manager Nancy Galkowski to make the presentation. Ms. Galkowski summarized the history of the Fire Station Committee and introduced the members including Dave Berry, Marvin Lewiton, John Fitzmaurice, Bob Jefferson and Michael Caggiano. Mr. Lewiton stated that adequate response time was the main goal of finding the right location for the new fire station. Response time and the poor condition of the Highland Station made finding an alternate location attractive to the Committee. Mr. Lewiton stated that the Committee looked at several areas that met the criteria and could handle a minimum 20,000 square foot station. Sites reviewed included Symmes Hospital, the Town Yard, Wellington Park and Cutter Road/Summer Street.

Ms. Galkowski reviewed the size of the needed space on Hills Hill and the current location and site conditions.

Ms. Galkowski stated that the following was needed in order for the land use to be transferred:

1. Unanimous vote of the Park and Recreation Commission
2. Unanimous vote of the Conservation Commission
3. 2/3 vote of Town Meeting
4. 2/3 vote of the Legislature
5. Approval by the Secretary of the Interior

Deputy Fire Chief Bob Jefferson stated the current conditions of the Highland Station are awful and that the potential sale of the Highland Station could help with the funding for the new station. Mr. Jefferson also stated that the Hills Hill location was a user-friendly location with the access to Summer Street.

Mr. Vitters stated that he is hesitant to give up open space without getting something for open space in return. Mr. Vitters stated that the argument would have to be very strong to allow him to make that justification. Ms. Mayer was also not convinced that this proposal warranted the giving up of open space.

Mr. Charles McKenzie who lives across the street from Hills Hill stated that he did not want a Fire Station in his front yard and that the Summer Street residents have already put up with an awful lot with the road construction.

Mr. William Burke stated that the town has limited wooded areas and that open space should be preserved. Mr. Burke stated that Arlington was land poor and he did not see a convincing argument for giving up the land. Mr. Burke also stated his dissatisfaction with the building and financial management in the town.

Ms. Jeanne Leary stated the Summer Street neighbors have burdened enough with the road construction and ice rink hours. Ms. Leary stated that she had the deed to Hill Hill that stated it was to be used for the “children of Arlington”. Ms. Leary will get Mr. Connelly a copy of the deed.

Mr. Jefferson did state that this process had been going on for ten years.

Ms. Mayer stated that in the latest vision 20/20 survey it is highlighted that the Town’s people value open space and want it protected.

Ms. Galkowski asked for a sense from the Commission so that the Fire Station Committee could move forward. Ms. Rothenberg, Ms. Campbell and Mr. Robillard asked for more time to evaluate the proposal.

Mr. Vitters stated that he would like to see a master plan of the entire Summer Street complex with this proposal built in, but he was still not convinced that this use was a compelling of enough argument to give up open space.

Ms. Mayer asked Mr. Connelly to place this item on the January agenda.

Pheasant Ave./Stratton School Playground Design Review

Mr. Leonard reviewed the process so far recapping the public input session and a preliminary meeting with the school children and school representatives. Mr. Leonard reviewed the existing conditions and preliminary design. The Commission reviewed the plans with Ms. Spangler who was representing the school and neighborhood. Mr. Connelly stated that the plan encompassed many of the components the kids asked for including: additional swings, climbing wall, rubber surfacing, higher slide and spring toys for the

tot structure. The plan also included additional shade trees, which was highly recommended at the public input session. Mr. Connelly stated that the design kept with the tradition of making each playground unique. The Commission asked Mr. Leonard to start preparing the preliminary budget and report back with a revised plan for the January meeting. Mr. Connelly stated that a follow-up public hearing would take place towards the end of January with a final plan being ready for approval at the Commission's February meeting. The Commission did discuss the separation from the field and the playground with fencing, benches or stones. Mr. Leonard will explore these different options.

Draft Policy Review – Bench Dedication, Wedding & Photograph, Film Production

The Commission reviewed the Wedding Photograph policy and Film Production Policy. Ms. Mayer stated that Town Counsel had reviewed the policies and gave it's ok. Mr. Connelly stated that new indemnification language was included. Mr. Robillard motioned to approve both policies, seconded by Ms. Campbell and approved 5-0.

The Commission discussed the bench dedication policy. The Commission recommend going forward with feedback from the user groups on the following locations: Magnolia Field, North Union Field, Poets Corner and Robbins Farm.

Mr. Connelly will solicit input from the users and land stewards.

Recreation and Rink Update

Mr. Connelly announced that the brochure was being well received and that many non-residents were calling to register and inquire about our programs. Mr. Connelly attributes this to the new distribution method.

Mr. Connelly announced that Program Coordinator, Heather Maietta, has submitted her resignation. Mr. Connelly stated that the department would go through a reorganization that will allow the department to save significantly in their salary and wage expenses and provide greater efficiencies.

Mr. Connelly reviewed the latest on the discussions around a second ice sheet. Mr. Vitters shared a diagram with the Commission and his concerns. Mr. Connelly stated that an RFP is being prepared to evaluate all options.

Current Projects:

Mr. Connelly stated that the Bishop Playground project is complete and that Pheasant was in the design stages. Mr. Connelly stated that there has been no movement on Menotomy due to the weather, however the project is just about 100% complete. Ms. Mayer announced the date of the Thorndike Parking public input session of January 29th.

Mr. Connelly reviewed the Buzzell Field project stating that the weather has temporarily placed the project on hold. Mr. Connelly stated that the project has now just about completed the capping process and was in the field renovation stage. Mr. Connelly shared the current budget numbers stating that a deduct for the basketball court was necessary to pay for some of the capping costs.

Committee Updates

Green Dog – Ms Mayer reviewed the results of the first five meetings and stated that there were three more to go.

Friends of Parks - Ms. Rothenberg updated the Commission on the latest meeting and discussed the steps for moving forward with the brochure printing.

Other Business

Ms. Mayer and the Commission briefly discussed the switch in Arlington youth baseball from Little League to Cal Ripkin.

Ms. Campbell motioned to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Rothenberg and approved 5-0.

Meeting adjourned at 10 PM.

Respectively Submitted:

Joseph Connelly, Director of Recreation